

BLUE GRASS BLADE

WE AIM TO CUT DOWN ERROR AND ESTABLISH TRUTH.

A. T. Parker
High and Ashland East Side
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LIKE

A SACK OF SALT

When Put Into a Running Stream the
Salt Will Wash Away and
Only the Sack remains.

HAPPY CONSILAR GIVEN
FOR CHRISTIANITY

(By G. W. Foote.)

Discussing the issue of a "Dying Creed" as applied to modern Christianity, in the columns of the London Freethinker, the writer says:—

Christianity has long been a sack of salt in a stream of water. Gradually the salt is washed out, but the sack itself remains, and the name "Christianity" is still legible on its outside.

A hundred years ago Thomas Paine was still living, although he was nearing his end, having but three years to live. He was the hated author of the "Influencing Age of Reason; a book which the British authorities tried to suppress, and for publishing which dozens of men and women were condemned to long terms of imprisonment, the heroic Richard Carlile actually spending nine years and seven months in English gaols. Thomas Paine's great book is still a "wicked" one at Birmingham, where the Education Committee of the Town Council cannot allow it to lie upon the book stall at Town Hall meetings. But it is often praised elsewhere. Only the other day the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple told his hearers that the would find a good deal of what he was saying to them in "Tom Paine." It is notorious that nearly all Paine's positions are now occupied by the so-called Higher Critics. What it was a crime to publish a hundred years ago is now quite orthodox—outside Birmingham. Christian divines now teach what a century ago was "infamy" in Thomas Paine. Thus does the whirligig of time bring in its revenges.

Nearly all that Thomas Paine said about the Old Testament is endorsed by those Higher Critics. This I have abundantly shown by in the careful notes of the Twentieth Century edition of the Age of Reason. Even the diabolical suggestion that any Old Testament prophecy which was fulfilled was really written after the event is put forward now without the slightest hesitation by Christian scholars like Canon Driver.

A great deal of what Thomas Paine said about the New Testament is also endorsed by very respectable divines. He was called a "filthy beast" for smiling at the story of the miraculous birth of Jesus, and doubting whether a ghost could be the father of a bouncing boy. But even the great Sir Oliver Lodge—the Churches' Scientific big gun, brought out to thunder against "infidels"—actually tells his Christian friends that they should lose no time in giving Jesus two human parents instead of one, as being less improbable and more decent. Mr. Campbell wound up his old year's labors by calling the story of the Nativity "poetry" and "not history." The discussion of the "Virgin Birth" has been going on for some time in Christian circles, and the "traditional" school is gradually winning all along the line.

Matthew Arnold, thirty years ago, saw that all the Bible miracles were doomed. And he said so. The time was coming, he declared, when educated and intelligent persons would put the Bible miracles side by side with other miracles, and from that moment they would cease to be believed. That moment has been slowly but surely arriving. We may now say that it has arrived. Bible miracles are being denied by the very clergy. They will soon cease to be taught from pulpits. But they will be taught in Sunday Schools—for the men of God will stuff the children with these pious falsehoods as long as possible. There was a royal-hearted man of genius amongst Thomas Paine's contemporaries who believed Bible yarns as much as he did, and ridiculed many of them in his bold, bright, inimitable fashion. He was the one great poet of Scotland, and his name was Robert Burns.

He flung his glove in the face of "a' the priests that's out o' hell"—where he evidently thought most of them resided. In a poetical address to one of the cloth, he said:

"O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jurrin' hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd."

But he did not confine his lash to the "rascals." He laid it upon their Holy Book. Not directly, so to speak for that would not have done; but indirectly, so that everybody with brains enough could understand what he meant. Just look at this from "Death and Dr. Hornbrook":

"Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd.
Ev'n ministers, they have been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing wind, at times, to vend,
And naill't wi' Scripture."

Lying was the trade of these gentry, and their Holy Book had a strong resemblance to themselves.

"Some books are lies frae end to end," Burns didn't name one—for he was a sly dog; but any reader of the text could supply the sermon.

It is getting admitted now that the Bible is "lies frae end to end." Only the grave solemn, designing priests of the Holy Oracle boggle at the word "lies." They prefer to call the falsehoods "legends," "symbols," "allegories," and other soft, delusive names.

How much the more knowing clergy really believe themselves may be gathered from the following letter which appeared in the last number of the "Speaker" in 1906:—

"The Broad Church Creed."

To the Editor of The Speaker.
Sir—A correspondent recently stated in your columns that he had no idea of what the views of the extreme Broad Church Party are. May I say a word or two to enlighten him?

1. Of course, we reject the crude idea of Inspiration; as it would involve the conception of God being semi-human. To us God is the soul of the universe, transcending Personality, though possibly including it, and the idea of His "revealing" anything is mere anthropomorphism.

2. We regard the Old Testament stories as absolutely unhistorical, but valuable as enshrining truths in parables. We deal with much of the New Testament in the same way, e. g., in the unhistorical Fourth Gospel, the miracle of Cana (which was unknown to the synoptic writers) means simply changed from the Old Dispensation to the New.

3. We reject the Virgin Birth and physical Resurrection of our Lord as unhistorical. By His Divinity we mean that He was, in a unique sense, in touch with Unseen.

4. By the Trinity (in which we firmly believe) we mean nothing objective. I should describe the Trinity as three windows created by the Christian consciousness, whereby to gaze at the Divine.

This is, of course, the merest summary of a creed which is bringing many to have faith in, and love to, not the Jesus of history, but the Ideal Christ of Experience.

Yours, etc.,

R. C. Fillingham (Vicar of Hexton.)
Hexton Vicarage,

December 17, 1906.

So this is the Broad Church Creed. Our readers will see that the salt is all washed out of the sack; that the sack is empty, and has collapsed; and that nothing but the "Christianity" brand upon it is left to tell us what it was.

There is no "Inspiration" or "revelation"—there is no objective, that is, no actually "Trinity"—the Old Testament stories are "absolutely unhistorical;" that is, the events they record never happened—all the important stories in the New Testament are of the same character stories, including the Gospel heroes' introduction to the world and exit from it—indeed, the "Jesus of History" is nobody and the Christ of Experience is everything. In other words, Christianity is dead, and all that remains is the ghost of it—in the minds of its old professors.

We thank the Rev. R. C. Fillingham for this valuable declaration, which shows that Freethought criticism and propaganda had not been in vain.

MERELY

CLOSE COMMUNION

But it was Carried out with the Promise
of Spiritual Regeneration According to Scripture.

WHAT HAPPENED WHILE
THE OLD MAN WAS AWAY.

(From Justice)

It is seldom that a newspaper is launched upon the uncertain sea of American Journalism that is "without a muzzle," of some sort. Sometimes the muzzling process is self-created and it is only too frequent that outside influences exercise it.

Among our recent exchanges was one carrying the suggestive and well meaning name of "Justice" published at Duncan, Indian Terr. The issue at hand corroborates the title for it contains the following splendid and fearless article:—

One of Gods chosen disciples, commonly known as a Baptist minister, down the road at a little town on the Rock Island, took it into his head to visit a weak sister while her husband was at prayer meeting.

They hadn't communed but a few minutes when he started in to show her the glories and advantages of being regenerated and born of the spirit. Now sister says he, when you are born twice you are saved, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against you, nor me either for that matter, nor by the holy smokes both of us if the light has gone out. Now my lovey dovey sweet-heart, what is the use of us plodding through life with faces a yard long when we are already saved, God knew what Adam and Eve would do to that tree of wine saps when he let them get ripe.

Now honey the old man is over at the house of God getting born over once more, and he won't know a thing about it, in fact nobody but God will know, and we already have him squared. You know how kind our heavenly father was to Mary Magdalene, don't the scriptures positively say that if you believe and are babsouzed you are saved thank God for his generosity in providing plenty of faith and water. "That's right kiss your darling" we will hold communion again next time the old man goes to prayer-meeting, no need of getting scared he won't be back for an hour.

"Now there was a lake running right along by the side of this house and a window opening over it." Some prying fellows who doubted the faith of this man of God, had decided to watch the house. And when they had been convinced that this peddler of salvation to the whole soul, was bent on staying awhile, one of them went to inform the old man of how matters stood. The old man came, bringing with him a magazine shotgun. The other fellows stationed themselves at the back door and the windows that didn't open out on the lake, while the irate husband bolted right through the front door, starting a rough house immediately, at the rate of about two shots a second. The preacher who suddenly decided that his visit was out, started out at the back door. There he found a man. He rusted for the window and found another man. Suddenly remembering that water was ope of the surest means of salvation he went boldly through the window overlooking the lake, and swam to worldly salvation and theological oblivion. It seems that the preachers of this country are establishing quite a record of sexual criminality. They stand almost at the head of the professions for seduction, but it must be remembered that Heaven is full of adulterers and murders, while Hell is densely populated with such men as Jefferson, Washington, Lincoln, Franklin and Paine, who were so busy working for the betterment of humanity that they didn't have time to believe that God would punish a man throughout the endless ages of eternity just simply because he thought that his goodness was too great.

We don't say that Socialism will abolish all these illicit close communions, but we do say that it will that when a girl reaches maturity that she will be so high-minded, intellectual and independent that when she marries she will marry a man that is absolutely fitted both intellectual and physical to be her mate. And when she is so mated and one of these forked tongued serpents of the cloth comes along and goes to quoting scripture to her as a means to carry his degenerate plan out, she will slap a kink in his neck that will very much resemble the hair spring in a ladies watch.

Somebody said that Jesus Christ was a carpenter, it's a dickens of a wonder the preacher don't take a tumble themselves, and do a little work on the side, they ought to at least do enough work to buy life preservers to use when they have sudden call across bodies of water and haven't got time to wait for a boat.

This swimming bee we are making so much fuss over, came off down at Sigden I. T. just a few days ago.

HELL GATE IS ON THE WAR PATH

Experience of a Freethinker Who
Took in the Sights at the Jamestown Exposition.

(By Mrs. Edna Porter)
Is one thing doing here of which I want to tell you. In its own peculiar way it is very impressive. The place on the "War-path" known as "Hell Gate." You see men, women and children filling up the little boats which slowly but surely go round and round and round till they come to the bottomless pit and there the water gushes and gushes and the women and children begin to scream and hold their heads; but that doesn't stop the boat nor help one iota. Oh, you can't turn that vessel on its course, its doomed straight for hell! So intent was I watching that the idea of fear never dawned upon me and then too I'm a third generation of free thought and goodness! Well, that is only the starting point of fear. You go on and on and on, finally you do get to the bottom of hell, queer light, unearthly light but it's a hope for them all to grasp and one can almost hear the soothing of the storm-torn souls, the satisfying for a minute of their ignorance. Alas! 'tis only a landing and you must get out—there is no going back! On to hell! Then the screams proper start. Through the narrow passage-way they begin to push along, many are there still from the boat before waiting for the nerve to take the final step. First there is a battling of tin and the whistling of the wind, which sounds like the "wrath of God" indeed, then a gush of air tears your hat from your head, and as some of the hats are held so straight upon account of the hair being on end its no trouble to blow it back to the wind and storm, then you see a skeleton, if you have your eyes open, for some do say they keep their closed and only sway with the maddening crowd till its over, this skeleton dances and grins and strange lights abound, then comes the "cold devil" himself and some of his imps they rush at you, they grab you and actually touch you! Their long tails, which are the healthiest tails I ever saw being about four inches thick and yards long are thrown across the path and you stumble and stumble and when you reach out for help 'tis a spider on the wall which answers back. More skeletons, more spiders, more cobwebs, more, more and more of the screaming. I can hear it yet. It was real, the genuine article. Let us hope for a day when there will be no fear.

Sincerely Yours,

EDNA PORTER.

Recently the Lutheran Synod held a meeting in Pennsylvania and discussed the question of how the ministry could be made a more attractive calling for young men. The discussion ended by a vote being taken which decided an issue of raising a fund for the endowment of aged and indigent pastors and it seems to us that they are operating at the wrong end of the line. To endow and pension off a worn out preacher does not affect present needs. While the old man may rest in sweet content it does not provide for the young fellow who dislikes manual labor, wants to live high, dress well, exert an influence over women, and cut a big swath. The reports of the meeting state that the manner of raising the cash was left in charge of the committee on Pastor's fund, and then adds:—

There was a strong undercurrent of opposition to the measure, remaining unexpressed until a vote was taken, when the resolution was barely carried.

Rev. Conrad Huber, of Richmond, Ind., the chief promoter of the establishment of the fund, pointed out that the salary of the average clergyman is almost exhausted by his expenses; that when retiring on account of old age he has no savings to support himself or his family, and has no relief from poverty, except death. With such dark prospects in view few young men are willing to enter the ministry when there are so many other more attractive fields.

Biting Sarcasm Handed Out.
Rev. S. P. Long, of Mansfield, O., attacked the endowment fund with biting sarcasm. "A man should never enter the ministry," he said, "if his only reason is that there is a fund to take care of him when he is old."

I have never yet heard of a minister starving. The average annual income of a clergyman in this country is \$500; that of a lawyer \$500. If the clergy could talk less about the payment of their own salaries and more about the payment of the parish apportionments, more funds for salaries would be forthcoming. A man who enters the ministry, expecting to find a gold mine, will sink his pick into cabbage."

The resolution was adopted, and the former method of raising money for aged pastors by apportionment alone will be abandoned.

Preacher Emphasizes Virtue so Strongly that Woman Confesses Her Relations with Him.

Lincoln, Neb., July 18.—Rev W. P. Ferguson, fifty years of age, pastor of the First Methodist Church, was today suspended from the church on charges of misconduct with Mrs. Cross, a member of his congregation, at whose house the minister had boarded.

After listening to Mr. Ferguson delivered a powerful sermon on virtue, Mrs. Cross confessed to a prominent member of the congregation of gross misconduct with the minister at various times and places, at her home and in the pastor's study and also told of going to hotels with Ferguson. The woman was the principle witness and told of many acts of indiscretion between the minister and herself.

The sermon which Mrs. Cross says brought her to confess was a masterful effort and Mr. Ferguson apparently brought out all there was in the subject. He stated that it was the first duty of a man or woman to God and to the world to be virtuous. He dwelt on the misery that was caused by fathers and mothers departing from the path of virtue, closing his sermon with the statement that the world would not be saved until the social evil had been wholly eradicated.

CASH THE SOLE MAGNET

By Which Young Men are Expected
to be Attracted to the Christian Ministry.

PROVIDE FOR THE OLD
TO HELP THE YOUNG

How can the ministry be made more attractive?

This is the pressing question of the day with those whose mission it is to propagate superstition.

Young men refuse to join the ranks.

They see in the pulpit no hope for their material welfare and spiritual salvation cuts but little ice with them now.

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TWELVE

GOOD REASONS GIVEN

Why the Mother Love Home for Unfortunate Women and Their Babes Should be Well Supported.

CO-OPERATION, EDUCATION
AND APPLIED SCIENCE

(By Helen H. Plubrick.)

The following compendium will be found of interest to those who desire to see the plan upon which the new home is to be operated:—

1. The "salary grab" will be absent; salaries of managers and co-operatives being uniform.
2. The "profit evil" will be changed to good. All profits on industries of the home will be returned to the Treasury Trust, to enlarge and beautify the home and increase the advantages for the babes.

3. The atmosphere will be entirely scientific. Every vestige of superstition will be eradicated.

4. The stuffing feature of the public school will be absent. Education will be inductive. Both mother and babes will be trained to think.

5. The co-operative industrial feature, while solving the economic, will also solve the need of the industrial feature in all schools. No young woman who remains for a term of two or even one year, will lack a thorough training in all branches of housework and useful needlework.

6. The complete rudiments of English in phonetic nursery rhymes will prepare the babes to read as soon as they are able to talk.

7. The general principles of Astronomy, Eugenics and Human government, will be given the young women, in connection with their industrial education.

8. By eliminating the charity feature, providing for a legal name for the children and placing the young women on a social equality with the managers, self-respect and good conduct is an assured fact.

9. The fact that all profits accrue to the babes, thus proving to the world that no possible "graft" is secreted or attendant, will insure to the Home Industries, a wide patronage and practically eliminate competition with grafting corporations.

10. The "habit of co-operating" vs competing for power over others will be established, thus preparing, without force, for the Co-operative Commonwealth.

11. The service check system, showing quality of service done, as well as character of servant, more than answers the question of "incentive to good service" since the competition will express in efforts to have the "character" good on service checks on file in the office.

12. Pedigrees of the babes will be registered on solemn affirmation by mothers, thus removing very many follies and evils, as well as dispensing with the need of the church, whose only office and duty to the state is protection of genital lineage.

All scientific philanthropists and all Socialists who wish to help launch this movement, should inclose stamped envelope at once to—HELEN P. PHILBRICK,

Sec. Woman's International Study Club.

Cor. Amabel & Dayton Ave.
Los Angeles, California.

DON'T FAIL TO WRITE

Valuable Information on Modern Obscenity Proceedings Asked for and Offered in Return.

COMMUNICATION FROM
FREE SPEECH LEAGUE

(By Theodore Schroeder)

I need your helpful suggestions. I have written much in opposition to our present laws against "obscene" literature. These objections have largely been based upon the uncertainty of the statute which does not furnish any test by which to determine what is obscene and what not. The judicial legislation on the subject of "tests" is no better, because these are mutually contradictory and always leave it to the whim or caprice of juries or judges to determine.

(Continued on fourth page.)